

## Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-10 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07

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FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5087

INFO AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY SUVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 2787

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG, UNGA, VQ, US

SUBJ: REPORT OF VISITING MISSION TO US VIRGIN ISLANDS

REF: A) STATE 205667

B) USUN 2769

1. ON AUGUST 30, TUNISIAN MISOFF BACHROUCH INFORMED US OF THE C-24 VISITING MISSION'S DELIBERATIONS ON OUR SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS TO THE MISSION'S REPORT. BACHROUCH SAID THAT 80 PERCENT OF THOSE AMENDMENTS SUGGESTED IN THE ANNEX TO AMBASSADOR LEONARD'S LETTER HAD BEEN ACCEPTED WITHOUT QUESTION AND THAT SOME OF THE REST OF THE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS WOULD ALSO BE ACCEPTED. CONCERNING THE SUBSTANTIVE QUESTIONS RAISED IN THE BODY OF THE LETTER AND OUR DEMARCHE (REF B), BACHROUCH SAID THAT THEY PRESENTED SOMEWHAT GREATER DIFFICULTIES AND WERE STILL UNDER CONSIDERATION. BACHROUCH NOTED THAT CRITICISM OF THE DRAFT REPORT BY GOVERNOR KING'S ASSISTANT DE ZELA, CARRIED IN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS DAILY NEWS, TUESDAY, AUGUST 16, 1977, MADE IT CONSIDERABLY MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE  
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VISITING MISSION TO ACCEPT OUR SUBSTANTIVE SUGGESTIONS AND WOULD REQUIRE SOME PUBLIC COMMENT BY THE MISSION WHEN THE C-24 CONSIDERS THE MISSION'S REPORT.

2. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE: THE TEXT OF THE ARTICLE CONTAINED DE ZELA'S COMMENTS FOLLOWS:

QUOTE: BEGIN TEXT.

GOV'S AIDE TO MEET WITH UN PANEL

ASSISTANT TO THE GOVERNOR PETER DE ZELA LEFT THE VIRGIN ISLANDS MONDAY AFTERNOON FOR NEW YORK TO ATTEND A UNITED NATIONS DEBATE ON OFFSHORE TERRITORIES AND TO MEET WITH UNITED STATES OFFICIALS ABOUT THE PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON COLONIALISM, WHICH SENT A TEAM TO THE TERRITORY FOR A WEEK IN APRIL.

DE ZELA SAID THE REPORT "LEAVES MUCH TO BE DESIRED" AND REFLECTS "BASIC PROBLEMS" IN METHODOLOGY, CONCEPT AND FACTUAL ACCURACY. HE DECLINED TO GIVE DETAILS, SAYING, "IT WOULD BE IMPROPER FOR ME TO GO FURTHER AT THIS POINT."

DE ZELA IS TO ATTEND A U.N. DEBATE TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY ON PUERTO RICO AND OTHER OFFSHORE AREAS AND ALSO WILL MEET WITH OFFICIALS OF THE U.S. MISSION TO THE U.N. TO DISCUSS THE REPORT ON THE VIRGIN ISLANDS.

"GOVERNOR KING REVIEWED THE PRELIMINARY REPORT VERY CAREFULLY" BEFORE LEAVING FOR DENMARK LAST WEEK, DE ZELA SAID, "AND I AM COMMUNICATING HIS COMMENTS TO THE PEOPLE THERE IN LIGHT OF THE GOVERNOR'S ABSENCE."

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THE GOVERNOR'S AIDE IS SLATED TO GO ON TO WASHINGTON TO DISCUSS THE VISITING MISSION'S REPORT WITH STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS AS WELL.

THOSE MEETINGS ARE SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY AND POSSIBLY FRIDAY WITH OFFICIALS IN THE OFFICE OF JOHN A. BAKER, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION AFFAIRS, DE ZELA SAID.

THE UNITED NATIONS' SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON COLONIALISM, OFTEN REFERRED TO AS THE COMMITTEE OF 24, SENT A TEAM TO THE TERRITORY IN LATE APRIL FOR A WEEK-LONG INSPECTION OF POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN THE TERRITORY.

THE VISIT MARKED A TURNABOUT IN UNITED STATES POLICY UNDER THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION. PAST ADMINISTRATIONS HAD REFUSED REPEATEDLY TO ALLOW THE COMMITTEE TO VISIT THE VIRGIN ISLANDS.

AMBASSADOR BERENADO VUNIBOBO OF FIJI, HEAD OF THE VISITING MISSION, SAID BEFORE LEAVING THE TERRITORY THAT THE TEAM WOULD ANALYZE THE DATA GATHERED DURING THE INSPECTION

TOUR AND DISCUSS THE FINDINGS WITH THE U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT  
OFFICIALS.

THE COMMITTEE'S PRELIMINARY REPORT HAS NOW BEEN  
COMPLETED BUT IT HAS NOT BEEN MADE PUBLIC.

MANY VIRGIN ISLANDS OFFICIALS, INCLUDING SEVERAL SENATORS,  
EXPRESSED DOUBT AT THE TIME OF THE TEAM'S VISIT AS TO WHETHER  
AN ACCURATE ASSESSMENT OF CONDITIONS IN THE TERRITORY COULD  
BE MADE IN JUST ONE WEEK, PARTICULARLY SINCE THAT WEEK WAS  
THE ONE LEADING UP TO CARNIVAL IN ST. THOMAS.

END TEXT. UNQUOTE.

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## Message Attributes

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